REMARKS

Claims 12-17 and 19-23 are all the claims pending in the application.

I. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

A. Claims 12-14, 16, 18, 19, 21 and 23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abe et al. (US 5,978,546) in view of Kroeger et al. (US 6,178,317), and further in view of Kawakami et al. (US 5,619,385).

Claim 12, as amended, recites that the delay time is controlled in a manner such that the delay time is made greater as the tape speed indicated by the VTR tape speed information increases. Applicants respectfully submit that the above-noted prior art references do not teach or suggest at least this feature of claim 12.

Regarding the above-noted feature, Applicants note that in the Office Action, the Examiner has taken the position that Kawakami discloses that a delay time is controlled based on VTR tape speed information (see the paragraph bridging pages 3-4 of the Office Action). In this regard, Applicants note that Kawakami discloses that delay time "t" is the time satisfying the condition of $t=d/v$, where "d" is the distance between two heads, and "v" is the tape running speed (see col. 22, lines 52-55).

Thus, in Kawakami, because delay time "t" satisfies the condition $t=d/v$, Applicants note that the delay time (i.e., "t") decreases as the tape running speed (i.e., "v") increases. In direct contrast to such a relationship, as noted above, claim 12 has been amended to recite that the delay time is made greater as the tape speed increases.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that Kawakami does not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious the above-noted feature recited in amended claim 12 which indicates that the delay time is controlled in a manner such that the delay time is made greater as the tape speed indicated by the VTR tape speed information increases. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Abe nor Kroeger cures this deficiency of Kawakami.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 is patentable over the cited prior art, an indication of which is kindly requested. Claims 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21 and 23 depend from claim 12 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

B. Claim 15 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abe et al. (US 5,978,546) in view of Kroeger et al. (US 6,178,317) and Kawakami et al. (US 5,619,385), and further in view of Nakamura (US 5,299,267).

Claim 15 depends from claim 12. Applicants submit that Nakamura fails to cure the deficiencies of Abe, Kroeger and Kawakami, as discussed above, with respect to claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 15 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

C. Claims 17, 20 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abe et al. (US 5,978,546) in view of Kroeger et al. (US 6,178,317) and Kawakami et al. (US 5,619,385), and further in view of Yanagawa et al. (US 6,178,288).

Claims 17, 20 and 22 depend from claim 12. Applicants submit that Yanagawa fails to cure the deficiencies of Abe, Kroeger and Kawakami, as discussed above, with respect to claim

12. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 17, 20 and 22 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

II. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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